

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 MCT-01 SY-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00
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R 030310Z MAR 78
FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6231
INFO AMCONSUL ALEXANDRIA
AMEMBASSY ATHENS
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY NICOSIA
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

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E.O. 11652: NA
TAGS: PINS EG CY PEPR
SUBJECT: EGYPT TO TRY TERRORISTS IN ABSENTIA; DOMESTIC
- CRITICISM OF GOE MOUNTS

SUMMARY. GOE TO TRY TERRORISTS IN ABSENTIA. SADAT
CONTINUES ATTACK CYPRUS FOR "STABBING COMMANDOS IN BACK."
CRITICISM OF GOE HANDLING OF LARNACA AFFAIR COMES FROM
LEFTISTS, INDEPENDENTS AND WAFD. END SUMMARY.

1. PRESS MARCH 2 REPORTS GOE DECIDED "PALESTINIAN
TERRORISTS" WHO KILLED SIBAI WILL BE TRIED IN ABSENTIA.
HIGHER PUBLIC PROSECUTOR'S OFFICE WILL INTERVIEW
EGYPTIAN HOSTAGES, MEMBERS OF EGYPTIAN EMBASSY IN
PATCH SAYYID ADLI HUSAYN, CHIEF PUBLIC SECURITY PROSE-
CUTOR, TO CYPRUS TO FOLLOW DEVELOPMENTS IN TRIAL OF
TERRORISTS.

2. SADAT RETURNED TO ATTACK ON CYPRUS IN MARCH 1 PORT
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SAID SPEECH DENOUNCING "UNEXPECTED TREACHERY" OF
LARNACA, WHERE COMMANDOS ACCOMPLISHED HUMANITARIAN
MISSION, BUT WERE "STABBED IN BACK". COMMANDOS "UPHELD
PEOPLE" IMPORTANT LESSON THAT EGYPT WOULD DEFEND ANY
EGYPTIAN ANYWHERE AGAINST ANY AGGRESSION.

3. DOMESTIC CRITICS. LEFTIST PARTY WEEKLY NEWSPAPER

AL-AHALI (THE PEOPLES) MARCH 1 CRITICIZED GOE LACK OF COORDINATION WITH CYPRIOT AUTHORITIES AND CALLED ON GOVERNMENT TO RESIGN. AL-AHALI EDITORIAL CRITICIZES THOSE STIRRING UP "HOSTILE FEELINGS" AGAINST PALESTINIANS IN EGYPT SIMPLY BECAUSE ASSASSINS OF SIBAI WERE PALESTINIANS. LEFTISTS VOICED SAME SENTIMENTS IN PEOPLES ASSEMBLY DEBATE FEBRUARY 27 AND WERE JOINED BY SOME INDEPENDENTS AND WAFDISTS. THIRTEEN MEMBERS VOTED AGAINST CLAUSE IN ASSEMBLY STATEMENT WHICH SUPPORTED GOE ACTIONS.

4. COMMENT: ISSUE OF SIBAI ASSASSINATION AND LARNACA "RESCUE" BEING KEPT ALIVE BOTH BY SADAT AND HIS OPPOSERS. DESPITE GOE INSISTENCE THAT OPERATION WAS "SUCCESS", THERE IS WIDESPREAD CRITICISM OVER GOE HANDLING OF AFFAIR. LEFTISTS AND OTHERS LIKELY TO USE ISSUE TO CONTINUE STRESSING GOE INCOMPETENCE. EILTS

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